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Harvard guidelines on dealing with 'spy agencies'

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Issuing 18 detailed pages of guidelines, Harvard University has become the first academic institution in the United States to spell out what it will — and will not — permit in its dealings with U.S. intelligence agencies, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The directives to faculty and administrators, released recently, include the following:

- All research contracts between the university and the CIA must be made public.
- Individual faculty members who do consulting work for the CIA must say so in writing to the deans of their colleges.
- There can be no covert recruiting for the CIA on campus.
- The CIA cannot obtain the "unwitting" services of any faculty member or administrator.

The guidelines come at the end of a year-long study of questions raised in a report issued last April by the U.S. Senate Select Committee to

Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities.

"We do not believe that present relationships between the CIA and the academic community, as outlined by the select committee, can continue without posing a serious threat to the independence and integrity of the academic community," concluded the four-member Harvard committee appointed by president Derek C. Bok.

A major concern of the committee, according to Harvard general counsel Daniel Steiner, was to distinguish between "someone acting to obtain information of a nonpublic variety for the CIA, as opposed to doing analysis or research for public sources to aid the CIA in the analytical services it performs for the government."

The subject of massive campus demonstrations in the late 1960s, CIA involvement on university campuses still is a serious concern to administrators and faculty.

The committee guidelines came two weeks after a political-science professor at Brooklyn College in New York was denied tenure by his department for alleged contacts with the CIA. Prof. Michael I. Selzer has acknowledged that he was "debriefed" by a CIA representative in a 15-minute telephone conversation after a business trip to Europe.

Although the Harvard committee report points out that neither committee members nor president Bok have specific knowledge of any past or present covert CIA relationships with the Harvard community, and notes that some faculties within the university already have their own "conflict of interest" guidelines, it nevertheless concludes that "new rules of conduct" are needed.

Where previous "normal rules" governing contracts with outside agencies stipulated that the work could not be classified, that the results were subject to publication, and that the outside sponsor had to be identified, the new guidelines go a step further. All institutional contracts with the CIA now must be

made public and should include the subject matter, dollar amount of the contract, and the name of the faculty member doing the research.

Consulting arrangements that individuals at Harvard make with the CIA should pose no problems, the report concludes, so long as they are reported by faculty members to their appropriate deans — rather than being kept private.

In its discussion of covert recruiting techniques used by the CIA to search out employees on university campuses, the committee points out that foreign students at Harvard pose special problems. It therefore is not appropriate for any member of the Harvard community to "trigger a secret background investigation" of any other member, the committee concludes, and any faculty member who has an ongoing relationship with the CIA as a recruiter must report it to his or her dean.

Occasionally recommending candidates for positions in government — at the request, for example, of a newly elected president — is appropriate as long as an individual's consent is obtained first.

Similarly, occasional debriefings of faculty members recently returned from travel abroad — that are not the result of advance instructions from the CIA — are considered appropriate. But debriefings that become regular, and therefore could lead to "implicit understandings" are warned against.

Writing for propaganda purposes, such as doing an introduction for the fabricated diary of a purported defector, also is prohibited where a faculty member lends his name or position to material that he knows is either misleading or untrue.

The practice of misleading faculty members by asking them to do work for "private" organizations that are in fact fronts for the CIA violates the CIA's own directives to involve only "consenting" parties and "must stop," according to the new guidelines.